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FM AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8612

RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS IMMEDIATE 1220

RUEHAN/AMEMBASSY ANTANANARIVO IMMEDIATE 0018

INFO RUEHAS/AMEMBASSY ALGIERS 0051

RUEHAB/AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN 0078

RUEHBP/AMEMBASSY BAMAKO 0015

RUEHGI/AMEMBASSY BANGUI 0020

RUEHBS/AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS 2928

RUEHJB/AMEMBASSY BUJUMBURA 0057

RUEHRY/AMEMBASSY CONAKRY 0023

RUEHCO/AMEMBASSY COTONOU 0183

RUEHDK/AMEMBASSY DAKAR 0223

RUEHDJ/AMEMBASSY DJIBOUTI 0030

RUEHLGB/AMEMBASSY KIGALI 4831

RUEHLC/AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE 2685

RUEHPC/AMEMBASSY LOME 0401

RUEHLE/AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG 0003

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RUEHTU/AMEMBASSY TUNIS 0043

RUEHYD/AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE 0253

RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 0649

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 KINSHASA 000891

SENSITIVE

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR AF/W, AF/C AND AF/PD (CAnyaso, DWhitman)

PARIS PLS PASS USUNESCO

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: PREL PGOV EAID SCUL CG

SUBJECT: Kabilia visits Quebec City to promote Kinshasa's bid to host 2010 Summit of "la Francophonie"

**¶11. (SBU) Summary:** President Joseph Kabilia has broken with his preference for staying at home to instead attend this week's Francophonie Summit in Quebec City. Just days ago, the Democratic Republic of the Congo submitted its letter of candidacy for Kinshasa to host the 2010 summit; the only other candidate is Madagascar, which has been lobbying in support of Antananarivo for several months. The potential political benefits of hosting the summit in Kinshasa in 2010, the 50th anniversary of Congolese independence, are not lost on Kabilia, who likely faces an uphill battle in his bid for a second term in the 2011 presidential elections, to be held less than a year after the summit. End summary.

Kabilia breaks isolation to go to Quebec

**¶12. (SBU) The delegation of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to the 12th summit of "La Francophonie" in Quebec City departed Kinshasa October 13. The delegation was headed by President Joseph Kabilia, who learned French as an adult. (Note: Raised in Tanzania, Kabilia has excellent Swahili and English; he now also speaks French fluently. End note.) In attending the summit Kabilia is breaking with what has become his usual practice of not attending large international meetings. By nature a shy person, Kabilia did not attend this year's UN General Assembly. He also typically passes on OAU summits and meetings of sub-regional African organizations. In**

December of last year he turned down an invitation from Secretary Rice to meet with her at a summit of Great Lakes heads of state in Addis Ababa. The official reason for Kabila's absence at this year's UNGA was fighting in the eastern region of the DRC. Although the situation there has not changed significantly since the opening of UNGA, Kabila nonetheless decided to go to Quebec.

13. (SBU) The French DCM (pls protect) told Charge recently that Kabila has only one objective in going Quebec: to lobby for the DRC's candidacy to host the 2010 summit of francophone nations. In 2006, at the Bucharest summit, the DRC expressed interest in hosting the 2010 event, evoking two arguments: (1) The summit had never been held in Central Africa; and (2) 2010, the 50th anniversary of the DRC's independence (as well as for most of Africa's francophone nations) is the logical time for this event to be hosted by the DRC, the world's most populous French-speaking African nation and, indeed, the most populous francophone nation in the world. (Note: Zaire President Mobutu twice offered to host the Francophonie summit, offers that were rejected because of security concerns. End note.)

14. (SBU) Although the Congolese originally offered, at the Bucharest summit two years ago, to host the 2010 summit, a formal letter of candidacy was not submitted to Francophonie Secretary General Abdou Diouf until Saturday, October 11, less than a week before the Quebec City meeting's opening on October 17. Kabila and his team debated whether to host the event for almost two years, even though a number of francophone nations encouraged the DRC to

KINSHASA 00000891 002 OF 002

present its candidacy. The leading proponent within the GDRC for hosting the event during the long internal debate was Andre Kimbuta, the mayor of city of Kinshasa, who is also the governor of the province of Kinshasa. (Note: Charge recently met with Kimbuta to discuss another issue; Kimbuta proudly introduced himself as the "mayor of the largest French-speaking city in the world." End note.)

Madagascar is the only other candidate

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15. (SBU) The only other announced candidate to host the 2010 summit is Madagascar, which formalized its bid many months ago. According to our French contact, Madagascar has at least 10 confirmed supporters. But the DRC has a good chance of getting the nod, he said, because of the DRC's two compelling arguments: the event has never been held in Central Africa, and the DRC, as Africa's largest francophone nation, would be a more appropriate site for the event on the 50th anniversary of the independence of many of Africa's French-speaking nations. Regarding the first argument, we understand that reports are circulating that President Omar Bongo of Gabon will nominate Libreville as the venue if Kinshasa's candidacy fails to attract support. We understand that Diouf also supports the DRC. Finally, the government of Madagascar may have alienated France and certain other countries by having decreed in 2007 that English is a co-official language with French and Malgache. (Note: the Francophonie chooses its bi-annual summit city by consensus; there is no vote. End note.)

16. (SBU) Comment: We understand the internal GDRC debate over whether to host the summit was finally won by those who argued that holding the event in Kinshasa could be politically beneficial for Kabila, whose popularity in this, the country's most populous city, is very low. Summit preparations will require significant investments in infrastructure, including roads, communications, hotels, and other buildings, which in turn should create many new jobs. Grants or low-interest loans for many projects are likely to be provided by the organization's wealthiest members. The event itself will bring some 60 heads of state or government to the DRC, accompanied by their delegations and the media. Kabila and his ministers will also benefit from a wave of international and local press coverage. This will be much appreciated by the ruling party in the lead-up to the 2011 presidential elections, to be held no later than September, 2011. End comment.

Brock